

# Horticulture CHECKLIST

TIMELY REMINDERS FOR THE GARDENING YEAR





- ☐ Catch up on your garden reading; make notes and plans for next spring.
- ☐ Line up outdoor contractors you'll need for spring projects now.
- ☐ Assess your winter landscape; note gaps to fill with shrubs or trees.
- ☐ Start seeds indoors, following packet directions for timing and care.
- ☐ Order plants by mail. Many companies will take your order but delay shipping until it's appropriate for your climate.
- ☐ Inventory fertilizers and other hardgoods you may need to replenish before spring. Take advantage of "early bird" sales.

- ☐ Prune trees and shrubs, except for those that set flower buds on last year's wood, such as bigleaf hydrangea, forsythia and quince.
- ☐ Protect broadleaf evergreens from sun and wind with burlap.
- ☐ Squirrels do not like safflower seed; try it in your feeders.
- ☐ Order seeds early, before favorites sell out.
- ☐ Move houseplants closer to the window as light levels diminish in winter.
- ☐ Check stored tubers throughout the winter and discard any showing signs of rot.
- ☐ Find severe weather warnings at the National Weather Service ([weather.gov](http://weather.gov)).
- ☐ Use Christmas tree branches to cover delicate perennials.
- ☐ Spider plants are great air purifiers for the home and office.
- ☐ Keep blooming potted bulbs out of direct sun for a longer display.
- ☐ Seeds sprout best at 70° F, but seedlings don't need as much warmth.

- ☐ Visit a park or arboretum to observe trees and shrubs with interesting form or bark.
- ☐ Spread peanut butter on pinecones for the birds.
- ☐ The majority of plants should be pruned in late winter or early spring.
- ☐ Seedlings grow toward light; rotate pots daily for straight growth.
- ☐ Brush indoor seedlings gently with paper to strengthen their stems.



- ☐ Inspect shrubs and trees for winter damage. Remove dead or damaged branches.

- ☐ Pull protective mulch off of perennials. Plant annuals after the last frost.
- ☐ Move existing plants to new locations, if desired.
- ☐ Divide perennials that bloom in summer or fall.
- ☐ Prune spring-blooming shrubs, if desired, after they finish flowering.
- ☐ Top-dress gardens with compost or well-rotted manure, and spread mulch to get a jump on weed control and conserve moisture.
- ☐ Set up stakes or cages for potentially floppy perennials, such as delphiniums, peonies and hollyhocks, before they reach one foot high.
- ☐ Set bamboo stakes next to gladiolus to keep them from flopping.
- ☐ Cold crops to plant in early spring include onions, broccoli, kale and spinach.
- ☐ Divide ornamental grasses in early spring.
- ☐ When pruning, save long stems to use as stakes.
- ☐ Apply chemical-free corn gluten to

- lawns to stop broadleaf weeds from sprouting.
- ☐ Site fragrant shrubs near a path or porch so their scent can be enjoyed.
- ☐ Plant perennials early for best root growth.
- ☐ Remove tulip flowers as soon as they start to fade.
- ☐ It's easiest to dig when the earth is damp, not dry or wet.
- ☐ Cut off Easter lilies' anthers before the pollen sheds.
- ☐ Buy plants with more buds than open blooms.
- ☐ Prune roses just after their leaf buds begin to swell.
- ☐ Animal repellents need to be reapplied after a rain.
- ☐ Remove winter mulch on an overcast day.
- ☐ Start summer-blooming bulbs indoors if the soil is still cold.
- ☐ Propagate shrubs by softwood cuttings in late spring.
- ☐ If a late frost threatens, cover tender

plants with a sheet or cardboard box.

- ☐ Be aware that leaves may prevent rain from reaching window boxes.



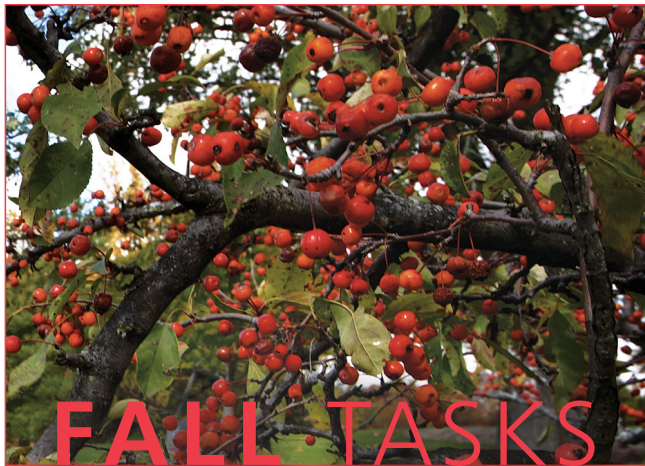
- ☐ Pinch mums and asters to encourage compact growth. Stop pinching by July 4.
- ☐ Keep new plantings watered well—an inch per week through their first summer.
- ☐ Cut back delphiniums and salvias after they bloom; they may rebloom later.
- ☐ Deadhead annuals and any perennials you do not want to set seed.



- ☐ Tie climbing plants and tall perennials to their supports as they grow.
- ☐ Mow lawns to 3 inches to help them best conserve moisture and shade out weeds.
- ☐ Keep an eye out for pests and diseases. Consult local nurseries or extension offices for help in treating them.
- ☐ Pinch back tall fall-blooming plants several times for bushier growth.
- ☐ Increase your gardening space by adding an arbor or trellis for a vine.
- ☐ Plant lemongrass; it is proven to repel mosquitos.
- ☐ Hoe weeds under while they are tiny to avoid pulling by hand.
- ☐ Divide perennials after they bloom. Shade the divisions at first.
- ☐ For a unique bouquet, snip a small sample of everything in bloom.
- ☐ Cut back the foliage of spring bloomers.
- ☐ Wind the hose in a figure-8 and it will unwind without kinks.
- ☐ Plan for a fall veggie garden of broc-

- coli, kale, lettuce and others.
- ☐ Carry alcohol-based wipes in case of contact with poison ivy.
- ☐ Prune bigleaf hydrangea, such as 'Nikko Blue', directly after it flowers.
- ☐ Perk up tomato plants with a drink of fish emulsion in midsummer.
- ☐ Increase the flower size of dahlias and mums by removing half of their buds.
- ☐ Water deeply and infrequently rather than lightly and often.
- ☐ Cut back salvia and border phlox and they may rebloom.
- ☐ To prolong the life of a hose, don't leave it lying in hot sun.
- ☐ Container plantings may need water twice a day in high summer.
- ☐ Harvest herbs before they bloom for the most flavor.
- ☐ Pick zucchini and squash frequently to keep it producing.
- ☐ Order bulbs for fall planting early to be sure you get your first choices.
- ☐ Herbs require sharp drainage.

- Try planting them in a raised bed.
- ☐ Fill window boxes with vermiculite and sink pots into it to conserve moisture and lighten the load.
- ☐ Mandevilla and morning glory are good vines for a mailbox post.
- ☐ Make a climbing rose look fuller by letting clematis scramble up it.
- ☐ Choose heirloom varieties when planning a fragrant garden.
- ☐ Never use a liquid feed on dry plants; water them with plain water first.
- ☐ If you use self-watering containers, water from the top occasionally to flush the soil.
- ☐ Water tomatoes evenly to avoid blossom-end rot.
- ☐ Add a large hosta leaf to a fresh-cut flower bouquet.
- ☐ Butterflies like to bask on stones and bare patches in the garden.
- ☐ Remove dead wood from the inside of hedges to promote airflow.
- ☐ Treat perennial weeds in late summer or early fall, when they're building reserves.



- ☐ Plant trees and shrubs. If fall rains are scarce, keep them watered by hand.
- ☐ Plant spring-blooming bulbs, and fertilize existing bulb plantings.
- ☐ Pull up this year's annuals as they fade.
- ☐ Turn the compost pile. Fallen leaves and garden clippings can go into it.
- ☐ Cut the lawn low on the last mow of the year.
- ☐ Cut perennials down to within several inches of the ground, except for those with decorative or bird-feeding seed heads.
- ☐ Shred fallen leaves and spread them on flowerbeds.
- ☐ Cut stems of coleus and geraniums to

root in water over the winter.

- ☐ Add sharp grit to bulb holes to keep voles away.
- ☐ Collect coffee grounds from local cafes to add to your compost or shredded leaves.
- ☐ Clean up the garden. Pests and diseases can winter-over in dead plants and debris.
- ☐ Bury pots of bulbs; in spring you can dig them up and rearrange them as they bloom.
- ☐ Wash, dry and sharpen tools. Oil wooden handles.
- ☐ Empty your lawn mower of gas before storing it.
- ☐ Plant trees and shrubs about 6 weeks before your last expected frost.
- ☐ Sow seeds of annuals such as pansies in fall for an earlier spring bloom.
- ☐ Move houseplants indoors before night temperatures fall below 50°F.
- ☐ Run a mulching mower over fallen leaves rather than raking them all.
- ☐ Make a note of what didn't work well in your garden this year and why.

- ☐ Shred fallen leaves and spread them over flowerbeds.
- ☐ Get your soil tested and apply recommended amendments now for a jump on spring.
- ☐ Wait until after the ground freezes to apply winter mulch to perennials and shrubs.
- ☐ Plant bare-root peonies in the fall.
- ☐ Stake only those new trees that are subject to strong wind.
- ☐ Give Christmas cactus 12 hours of darkness each day starting mid-October.
- ☐ Spread compost over beds to improve the soil over the winter.
- ☐ Plant tulips where they will not receive extra water in summer.
- ☐ Dispose of diseased perennials in the garbage rather than the compost pile.
- ☐ In cold climates, pin a climbing rose's stems to the ground and mulch over for the winter.
- ☐ Pot up paperwhites in late November for holiday bloom. 🌿